Reflecting on Disciplinary Ethics in Folkloristics

8th International Conference of Young Folklorists
September 19-21, 2018, Riga, Latvia
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Riga, September 19-21, 2018
ORGANIZERS

Archives of Latvian Folklore of Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia

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The Archives of Latvian Folklore (Latviešu folkloras krātuve) were established in 1924 in Riga, following the initiative of Anna Bēržkalne (1891–1956), a folklorist and school teacher. Based on international standards, the Archives were developed as the central institution for the collection and study of folklore in Latvia. It is a department within the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia. Along with documenting and preserving the intangible cultural heritage the Archives of Latvian Folklore carry out research and publish their studies. The main areas of research are currently: digital humanities, cultural heritage studies, history of folkloristics, narrative studies, research of mythology and traditional music.

Being the largest center for collection of Latvian oral traditions, the holdings of the Archives of Latvian Folklore contain approximately 3 million folklore items. The main body is constituted by Latvian folklore, but there are also collections of Livonian, Russian, German, Belarusian, Jewish, Lithuanian, Estonian and Roma folklore. The collections represent the culture of different social groups, since folklore was collected among peasants, schoolchildren, soldiers, informants in old people’s homes, in prisons, etc. The major part of the depository is made up of handwritten manuscripts. However, there are also sound and video recordings, notations, drawings and photographs of different decades in the holdings of the Archives.

A significant treasure of the Archives of Latvian Folklore is Dainu skapis—the Cabinet of Folksongs. It is a filing cabinet of the Latvian folksongs, containing the original manuscripts of the texts published in the edition “Latvju dainas” (1894–1915, in 6 volumes). The Dainu skapis was made in Moscow in 1880 according to the design of Krišjānis Barons (1835–1923), the compiler and editor of the aforementioned edition. The folksong manuscripts in the cabinet are arranged in 70 drawers, there are 268 815 paper slips (sized 3 x 11 cm) with folksong texts handwritten by hundreds of collectors. In 2001, the Dainu skapis was recognised as a cultural heritage item of international regard and inscribed on the UNESCO “Memory of the World” Register.

In 2014, the Archives of Latvian Folklore moved from its former home at the Latvian Academy of Sciences to the newly-built Latvian National Library (in Riga, Mūkusalas iela 3; located on the 5th floor). The holdings are available online on the Digital Archives of Latvian Folklore, garamantas.lv (in English: folklore.lv). The digitised content of the Dainu skapis is available online also from the site dainuskapis.lv.
The International Conference of Young Folklorists titled “Reflecting on Disciplinary Ethics in Folkloristics” will take place in Riga, September 19-21, 2018. The 2018 conference is the 8th of its kind. Previous ones have been held in Tartu, Estonia or in Vilnius, Lithuania. This is the first time when this event that aims to foster academic collaboration and communication in the field of folkloristics, inviting students, recently graduated scholars, and anyone who considers themselves to be a young folklorist to present their research, and it will all happen in Riga, Latvia. The topic of the 2018 conference invited contributions to address the questions of ethics in folkloristics.

Since the turning point in the 1960s and 1970s, when folklorists went from the study of archive materials to that of live performances, an inalienable part of folklorists’ work has been getting to know the lives of their informants by listening to personal details and memories while documenting living traditions. Therefore, folklorists’ work has been accompanied by ethical dilemmas ever since. The discussion on ethical standards in folkloristics has been raised multiple times. The American Folklore Society published their “Statement of Ethics” in 1988; in 1998, the International Society for Folk Narrative Research instituted a special committee on ethics to spearhead an international debate on ethics from a folkloristic perspective; the Folklore Fellows, an international network of folklorists, has also addressed the issue several times. But the ethical challenges are still present, whether it be a fieldwork carried out in remote rural villages, the urban environment of modern cities, or dealing with digital informants in the virtual world. Even in the Digital Age it is still all about “people studying people”.

Are there situations when personal engagement can get in the way of truthful reporting? To whom should the folklorist be responsible: the scholarly truth or the informant? What are the researchers’ responsibilities to those being studied? Are there any fields of research too sensitive and ethically too difficult to be addressed at all? What are the principles of ethically correct work with archived material and its representation in the digital tradition archives? What are the new ethical challenges introduced by the Digital Age? How does the research affect the lives of informants, and should such influence be exerted by the results of the research? Can researchers have too much empathy? Some questions regarding the ethics in folkloristics might never be answered, but nevertheless: with this conference we would like the young folklorists to join the international debate.

The topics of interest for the conference included, but were not limited to the following:
• Ethical challenges in folkloristics: research, fieldwork, archives
• Overcoming stereotypes and authorities
• Professional responsibility to informants: informed consent, communication, problems of patronizing the community
• Folklore within media and creative industries
• Controversial and sensitive topics: personal information, gender issues, ownership of folklore
• Problems of defining, preserving and communicating the intangible cultural heritage
• Ethical issues of the Digital Age

PROGRAM

September 19

10:00 - 11:30
Registration at the Archives of Latvian Folklore

11:30 - 13:00
1st session: Artistic Expression and Ethical Issues
Viktorija Pritulaka: Ethnomusicologist Ethical Issues. The Case of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Riga
Elīna Gailīte: Is Stage Folk Dance a Folk Dance?
Jaydip Chaudhari: Tribal Arts and Intellectual Rights in India

13:00 - 13:45
Lunch

13:45 - 15:45
2nd session: Interdisciplinary Interactions
Nimeshika Venkatesan: Dialogic Interactions, Folk Aesthetics and the Novelized Saint Stories, a Study
Savannah Rivka Powell: Intersections of Indigenous Methodologies and Feminist Theory: Addressing Ethical Challenges in Research
Ilze Mileiko: Reflection on Some Ethical Challenge Using Interdisciplinary Methodology in Folkloristic and Social Anthropology
Elvīra Žvarte: What to Do with the Diaries in the Archives of Folklore?

15:45 - 16:00
Coffee break

16:00 - 18:00
3rd session: Folklore and Media
Abha Bharali: Folklore in Print Media: With Special Reference to Fictional Works of Birinchi Kumar Barua
Asta Skujytė-Razmienė: Folklore and Gaming Industry: The Case of Video Game the Witcher
Denise McKeown: Dog Cloning Discourses: What Are My Ethical and Academic Responsibilities for Incorporating the Valuable Views in Online Comments?
Ginta Pērle-Sīle: Stereotypes in First Latvian Folksong Collections

19:00 - 22:00
Opening evening.
Kaņeppe Cultural Centre

September 20

10:30 - 12:00
Keynote lecture:
Dr. Valdimar Tr. Hafstein: Copyrighting Tradition: Creative Agency from a Folklorist’s Perspective

12:00 - 12:45
Lunch

12:45 - 14:45
4th session: Ethics in the Archives
Tiger Juntao Du: From Postcolonial Discourse to Lack of Conscience: The Struggle in Historical Archives Research of The 12-3 Incident in Macau

Viliina Silvonen: Ethics and Archives: Multilevel Immanent Perspectives of Research Ethics
Alena Leshkevich: Informed Consent on Inscribing Elements in Belarusian National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Tuukka Karlsson: Objectivity in the Study of Kalevala-meter Archive Material

14:45 - 15:00
Coffee break

15:00 - 17:00
5th session: Fieldwork Ethics
Kristina Eiviler: Talking about Demonology: Ethical Issues in Field Research
Anastasiya Fiadotava: Is Family Humour a Sensitive Issue? Reflections on Doing Fieldwork on Humorous Family Folklore
Yimshen Naro Jamir: Contestations of the Field: Difficulties in Ethical Research of Folk Memories
Katalin Pajor: Ethic Issues by Collecting Life Stories About National / Ethnic Identity in Mixed-Ethnic Families

18:00 - 21:00
Movie night. Cinema Kino Bize
Valdis Muktupāvels (commentary) “Latvian Folklore: Songs of Calendric Customs” (Director Andris Slapiņš, 1983, 20 min)
Aigars Lielbārdis “Vera and Jānis” (2006, 30 min)

September 21

9:30 - 11:00
Keynote lecture:
Dr. Anita Vaivade: Sensitivities and Consents in Researching Intangible Cultural Heritage

11:00 - 11:15
Coffee break
11:15 - 13:15
6th session: Ethical Questions of Cultural Heritage
Tatsiana Marmysh: Ethical Challenges of Intangible Heritage Safeguarding in Belarus
Vikram G. Chaudhari: Tribal Intangible Cultural Heritage Value and Preservation in India
Haripriya Sarma: The Problems of Defining, Preserving and Communicating the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Rabha People of Assam
Kikee D Bhutia: Possession Narratives and the Role of Ritual Healers in the Everyday Life in North Sikkim

13:15 - 14:00
Lunch

14:00 - 16:00
7th session: Ethnography Within the Society
Michele Tita: What is real? Desaparecidos, ethical issues and confusion about folklore research in Argentina
Elena Malaia: Ethics of Anthropological Research in Places with Unsettled Status (Based on the Materials of Crimea)
Sunita Acharya: Gender Stereotypes in Folktales and Its Impact on Society
Digne Ūdre: Hidden Ethnography: Alcohol and Fieldwork

16:00 - 16:15
Closing remarks
Anita Vaivade

Anita Vaivade has been Adjunct Professor at the Latvian Academy of Culture since 2012. After earning master degrees in sociology and legal sciences, she defended her doctoral thesis on the Conceptualisation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Law in 2011. The research had been conducted in parallel to professional responsibilities as Culture, Communication and Information Sector Director at the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO (2006-2012). Anita Vaivade led the Latvian delegation to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2013 to 2015, and since 2017 has been leading the UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage Policy and Law at the Latvian Academy of Culture. Anita Vaivade joined the UNESCO global network of facilitators in the field of intangible cultural heritage in 2017. She is currently co-leading the “Osmosis” research project, an international comparative study on intangible cultural heritage national legislation.

LECTURE

Sensitivities and Consents in Researching Intangible Cultural Heritage

Along with its rapid entrance into force in numerous countries worldwide, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003, has become a widely and diversely used reference, including for defining research agendas. In 2015, Ethical Principles for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage were also adopted. They refer, inter alia, to the issues of documentation and research and encompass, among other issues, concerns about sensitivities, be they cultural, historical or personal, and consents, primarily regarding free, prior and informed consent to be given by persons concerned. Considerations on sensitivities and consents both have implicitly grounded the spirit of the Convention and the course of its interpretation, and both are explicitly stated within the Ethical Principles. In relation to researching intangible cultural heritage and the practices of its safeguarding, these considerations are gradually emphasized and respected at various levels, in concrete forms and regarding diverging research enterprises in various countries.

Exploration of internationally patterned, as well as locally specific intangible cultural heritage law and related ethical principles illustrates more generic connections and entanglements between ethical considerations and law. Ethical concerns may be perceived as a necessary ground for any legislative step to be taken in a particular historical context; as a temporary guidance before being further eventually reshaped in a normative form; or as an overarching cover for numerous concrete normative measures already developed or still to come. All these connections may be observed in the case of researching intangible cultural heritage.
Valdimar Tr. Hafstein

Valdimar Tr. Hafstein is Professor of Folklore, Ethnology, and Museum Studies at the University of Iceland. He was the president of SIEF (International Society for Ethnology and Folklore) from 2013-2017 and chaired the Icelandic Commission for UNESCO from 2011-2012. He is the author of “Making Intangible Heritage: El Condor Pasa and Other Stories from UNESCO” (Indiana University Press, 2018) and a number of other scholarly articles and books on folklore, intangible heritage, cultural property, international heritage politics, and copyright in traditional knowledge.

LECTURE

Copyrighting Tradition
Creative Agency from a Folklorist’s Perspective

Should we copyright culture? How can one compose a one-hundred-year-old traditional lullaby? Who owns Cinderella? And what would the Brothers Grimm say? What is the historical provenance of such Catch-22s? While we may not resolve them in Riga, the lessons we learn from picking them apart can inform our thinking about creativity and agency in contemporary culture.

In 1844, Hans Christian Andersen accused the Brothers Grimm of stealing his tale “The Princess and the Pea”. That Andersen elsewhere attributes this tale to oral tradition (he heard it as a child) seems not to preclude it from becoming something that others could steal from him. Bizarre? Actually, it’s not such an unusual story and the United Nations even has a special committee negotiating a new international convention that addresses such appropriations of traditional culture and traditional knowledge, in music, in medicine, and in visual and verbal art.

Beginning with the paradoxical case of a traditional lullaby that acquired a composer late in its life and “fell into” copyright, this talk grapples with representations of creative agency – such as authorship and tradition – that are endowed with the force of law through the copyright regime. My motivation is to understand the dichotomies that shape understandings of creativity so that we will be better placed to undermine them, to liberate our imagination from their powerful hold, and to imagine creativity in alternative terms.

In a digital age, such acts of liberation and imagination are badly needed; creativity is still enclosed in categories from another era and bogged down by the weight of nineteenth-century romantic ideals about the author.
MOVIES

Valdimar Tr. Hafstein

The Flight of the Condor traces the global circulation of the melody “El Condor Pasa”: from the Andes mountains to global metropoles; from Lima to Paris to New York, and back; from panpipes to piano and from symphony orchestras to the disco; from indigenous to popular music; and from world music back to national heritage. Some of the protagonists are: Paul Simon, Art Garfunkel, Daniel Alomía Robles, Alan Lomax, Los Incas, the Cerro de Pasco Copper Company, the Victor Talking Machine Corporation, the Falangist Socialist Party of Bolivia, Chuck Berry, NASA, WIPO and UNESCO.

The story that the film tells shows how individual personalities and states can shape texts that become the foundation of global narratives; and how propositions made for a particular local reason become global instruments with entirely different effects in other corners of the world.

Unpacking the global/local dialectic, the film is a case study in paradox; it analyzes the prehistory of international heritage/copyright norms, the way that prehistory travels in oral and written circulation, and the enduring problems it points to in the implementation of these norms.

Aigars Liebārdis
“Vera and Jānis” (2006, 30 min)

The documentary film “Vera and Jānis” tells of an ordinary day in the life of a married couple – Vera and Jānis Luocis. They have lived whole live in the village of Timofeyevka, located in Novosibirsk district of the Russian Federation. Due to various social and economic circumstances many people in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries left their homelands and emigrated to Czarist Russia in search of land and prosperity. Timofeyevka was founded in 1894 by emigrants from Latgale, a region in the eastern part of present-day Latvia.

Vera and Jānis are the third generation of Latgalians still living in Timofeyevka. Similar to other communities that live far from their historical territories and main communities, the people of Timofeyevka have tried to preserve and maintain their identity, language and religion. Vera and Jānis still speak to each other in an ancient dialect spoken by their grandparents more than a century ago.

Valdis Muktupāvels (commentary)
“Latvian Folklore: Songs of Calendric Customs” (Director Andris Slapiņš, 1983, 20 min)

The film has been cast in a period, when the Soviet ideology and totalitarian system seemed to be strong and with a potential to last for ages, but different informal, grass-roots activities eroded its solid body. The interest in authentic folklore and traditional culture in general had sparked a neofolklore movement, which became more and more significant and challenging cultural activity of different groups, including school children and students. Based on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, a film about Latvian seasonal celebrations and their folklore was produced in the Riga Film Studio. It was intended for general education schools. The film director Andris Slapiņš chose a folklore ensemble “Savieši”, led by Valdis Muktupāvels, to be the main acting unit in the whole film. The ensemble members enthusiastically participated in the revival of traditional singing styles, musical instruments and calendar celebrations, and these activities laid the foundation for the film.

The main idea of the film is to show traditional calendar celebrations, characteristic for a particular season. Nature and rural environment help to create the necessary feeling – a context for the respective custom. Such ethnographically documented customs as the girls’ singing in spring, midsummer solstice celebration, autumn field works and rituals, commemoration of the shades of ancestors, masked mummers’ procession around winter solstice time are enacted. Apart from the audiovisual picture, a voice comments on thoughts, feelings, aspirations of people, who carried on these traditions, thus turning the age-old traditions into reality which speaks personally to modern generations.
Gender Stereotypes in Folktales and their Impact on Society

Since time immemorial gender stereotyping of girls and women has been quite prevalent in folktales. Gender-stereotyped portrayal of female characters in folktales definitely has a great impact on children and society, as these stories, primarily folk and fairy tales, are symbolic expressions of the inner experience of development in children. Apart from this, folktales connect children to psychological realities and that folktales assist children in their psychological, social and imaginative growth. The symbolic patterns these tales display become manifestations of psychological constructs. Based on this, the paper attempts to study gender stereotypes in folktales, and its impact on society. The paper will also try to determine whether the sex bias portrayal of female characters in folktales still as prevalent as in the past. This is important because today, despite our increasingly technologically literate society, the use of traditional literature is still recognized as an important teaching and cultural tool that assists in the process of development, communication, construction of identity, and education. The paper will also study the increased effort that is needed on the part of publishers and authors to provide children with literature that more closely parallels the roles of males and females in contemporary society.
Folklore in Print Media: With Special Reference to Fictional Works of Birinchi Kumar Barua

Birinchi Kumar Barua pioneered the study on folklore in North-East India. In 1955, Birinchi Kumar Barua established a folklore Archive Centre under the Anthropology Department of Gauhati University and later on this led to the development of the Department of Folkslore Research in 1972. Barua was awarded the Doctorate degree in 1947 by University of London for his thesis on “A Cultural History of Assam (Early Period)”. He contributed significantly towards the study of folklore through his works like Asamiya Bhasa aru Sanskriti (1957) and Asamar Loka-Sanskriti (1961). Barua pursued folklore studies through fictional writings. His novels Jivanar Batat (1944), Seuji Patar Kahini (1958) and collection of short stories Aghuni Bai (1950), Pat Paribartan (1954) represent different era of folklore. As a folklorist, he also studied on folklore through his fictional works. The folk elements reflected in Barua’s fictional works can be studied with an approach of the four dimensions of folklore as mentioned by R.M. Dorson in Folklore: An Introduction, namely “oral literature”, “material culture”, “social folk custom” and “folk performing arts”.

The folk elements in fictional works under print media will be analysed through the present study with a special emphasis on Barua’s fictional works. It is hoped that our study will extract the use of the elements of folklore in print media.

Possession Narratives and the Role of Ritual Healers in the Everyday Life in North Sikkim

When I visited Tingchim, my natal village in North-Sikkim, in 2017 after an absence of several months, I felt a sense of anxiety and fear thicken the air. I was meaning to visit a friend’s house. Night had already fallen and my friend and I walked together. Usually we would take a short-cut, but this time she said: “Let’s not go from the forest area this time. Who knows what waits in the dark? Let us take the long way as that road is lit with lights.” Clearly, something was amiss. In the days following I noticed that no villager was venturing into the forest. I then learned that the pawo had warned about a sdé (deity/spirit) lurking in the forest and waiting to appropriate a human soul as company.

This paper explores this recent bout of cosmic tension in the village along with the roles and powers of ritual healers and specialists in Tingchim. In doing so, I reflect on the complexities and fluidity of belief-narratives and understandings of the supernatural realm that surrounds the villagers. More broadly, this event leads me to reflect on what the villagers do and do not consider Buddhist practices and beliefs.

Various scholarship shows the complexity surrounding religious specialists and religious institutions in Tibet and other Himalayan areas. In approaching such phenomena in Sikkim, I discuss the vernacularisation of everyday Buddhism in Tingchim by illustrating the role of the monks and the pawo (shaman) of the village. I argue that the cosmic polity is best approach as a hierarchical space in which deities compete and contest over power and influence within and outside their “cosmic jurisdiction”. Ritual specialists are aware of these hierarchies and distinctions and variously apply invocation as a means of showing their power over the deities and to subjugate them in the pursuit of overcoming human illnesses and misfortunes and establishing themselves as the powerful figure in the village as well.
Tribal Arts and Intellectual Rights in India

The main topic of this discussion, are the dwelling tribal people in the western zonal states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and daman with a focus on their various traditional arts including the Varli paintings, the traditional medical knowledge, crafts, weaving, the art of hunting, agriculture, food, meals and cooking arts, the dress, their ornaments, etc. The main question is how can there be intellectual rights? Why they do not get intellectual rights?

Various famous companies and people use the tribal culture for their own purposes. But those who had developed and preserved for a long time, their intellectual rights are not well preserved, and with that reverence, their beliefs and emotions are getting blocked – they are a pained in this manner.

For example, the Varli and the Rathwa tribes’ “Pithora” is a religious item but it is commonly thought of as an ordinary artwork drawing. And the various companies use it as they can, and because of this, the rights of the tribes are not being used properly. The ancient civilization’s art and its rights are an important consideration of the research workers.

Tribal Intangible Cultural Heritage Value and Preservation in India

We have seen during the study of Tribal people’s culture and civilization who dwell in the western states of India such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Dadra Nagar Haveli-Daman, that the various arts of tribal members and their knowledge tradition is slowly vanishing. Today, with that involvement, I wish to discuss the idea of preserving these various arts, but it is proving to be very difficult awakening a self-esteem for that amongst them.

I wish to share my experiences of peoples arts-research work. From a long time One example is the age old tradition of Kunkana, Varli community sisters playing the Dera, a musical instrument.

This instrument is blown twice Vagh-Baras in Diwali and Holi-religious festivals. I have been hearing about this for 25 years from various elders. I have tried many a times to see and search for Dera. But alas! I could only find ten people who could play the instrument. I have tried my best, but they have given up blowing Dera for 25 years. I have tried my best to give suggestions to make and play the Dera again. Frome these ten people, two women passed away. I have made a small documentary film I wish to show you all.

Dera is a fibre-Instrument. It is made of earthen clay-pot, pea-cook feather, tick wood leaves and a reel of raw-thread. Such material can be brought to make this instrument. Any women can make on and blow one. However, this art is vanishing. The voice of Dera is like the voice of Indian national animal Vagh—the tiger. The name of the instrument is joined with the name of tiger—the zeal, and the instrument is blown on Vagh-Barash. I also have to discuss the Dovalu. The Dovalu is slowly vanishing. This ancient heritage is been disappearing slowly. This is the challenge in front of the research. How can these traditions be preserved?
From Postcolonial Discourse to Consciously Lackness: The Struggle in Historical Archival Research of The 12-3 Incident in Macau

The 12-3 incident (Chinese: 「一二·三」事件, known in Portugal as the 1-2-3 Riot (Portuguese: Motim 1-2-3)), is a riot in Portuguese Macau that happened on December 3, 1966, inspired by, at the same time, the Cultural Revolution in the People’s Republic of China. As a series of protests and riots organized by local Chinese peasant, the 12-3 incident received support from the Chinese government and resulted in the Portugal colonized authority withdrawal from Macau de facto (but the de jure Transfer of sovereignty from Portugal to China did not happen until 1999). The 12-3 incident played an important role in Macau, in de-colonization, the political structure transfer, social community and Chinese government influence. However, based on the communism, left-wing and the anti-authority background of this incident, the historical research of the incident is “silent” on both in Portuguese and Chinese sides.

In this paper, I analyze the archival collections of 12-3 incident in Portugal, China and Macau, to compare the research statement of this incident in different discourses. I analyze the research dilemma under the pressure from Chinese government authority system, the discourse gap between the official and folk levels, and the Portuguese role as a former colonizer.

In terms of methodology, this essay is mainly based on interdisciplinary research (combination of historical, cultural and political study), comparative study and the literature review method.

Talking about Demonology: Ethical Issues in Field Research

The following paper deals with the question of ethical issues in field researches on demonology and the frequently connected areas of magic and sorcery. The narratives analyzed in the paper were collected in field research of the dialect, rituals and customs of the Timok region (East Serbia, municipalities of Knjazevac, Zajecar and Svrljig), during 2015, 2016 and 2017. The research was done as a part of the project “The Summer School of Folklore” organized by the Faculty of Philosophy (University of Novi Sad, Serbia) and the project “Timok dialects” under patronage of the Institute for Balkan Studies (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts). The mentioned region of East Serbia is rich with diversity in cultures and languages, representing the confluence of Serbs, Bulgarians, Macedonian, and many other national minorities. The demonological creatures (such as vampires and fairies), are a vital part of local folk stories and beliefs. Magical practice, used for many different purposes, is present in everyday life. Nevertheless, these topics are “taboos”. Therefore, informants, in most cases, would not talk about them openly. In the paper, we are going to discuss the difficulties in field research related with the afore mentioned topics; strategies and possible questioners; physical, emotional and professional risks to research; the ethical problems of representing the other persons (for ex. neighbors, locals) mentioned by the informant.
Is Family Humour a Sensitive Issue?
Reflections on Doing Fieldwork on Humorous Family Folklore

Conducting interviews on humour may appear to be the perfect fieldwork for a folklorist. Since humour is omnipresent and manifests through a great variety of genres, a researcher can be flexible and approach the topic from different angles. Moreover, being a humorous person is generally regarded as a virtue; therefore, respondents are often willing to share their jokes and other forms of humorous folklore with the researcher. However, humour can also be a sensitive issue. A lot of forms of humorous expression play with aggression. The line between humour and aggression may be blurry for some interviewees, especially when it comes to interpersonal humour. Making jokes at someone else’s expense is not always reported as it might present the interviewee in an unfavorable light. It is sometimes true even when it comes to canned jokes (that are generally regarded as impersonal). Another important issue is interviewees’ concerns about political correctness. Some jokes that they share within a close circle of family and friends may end up getting self-censored during an interview. Another reason for respondents to keep their humour to themselves is that it might reflect their intimate issues. This is especially true for family humour, which is the main focus of my study.

In light of these limitations, conducting fieldwork on family humour can indeed be a sensitive issue and require trust and a close emotional connection between the interviewee and the interviewer. These considerations also raise the question of the extent to which a body of folk humour collected through interviews is representative of a family’s humorous folklore.

Is Stage Folk Dance a Folk Dance?
This year the 26th Song and 16th Dance Festival took place in Latvia, and for the first time the number of dancers (18,179) exceeded the number of singers (16,500). In general, there are many more people dancing in stage folk dance groups in Latvia. For example, there are many children’s dance groups and others who did not participate in this year’s festivities. These dances are called “folk dance” and are considered to be something inherited from the distant past. But it is known that the dances of such form emerged in 1945, when the first dance shows took place to prepare for the first Dance Festival. After this year’s festivities, like after all big folk dance events, a debate about the distinction between stage folk dance and folk dance has arisen. This annual situation has motivated me to think about what folk dance is nowadays, and whether it is ethical today to argue that the current staged folk dance form should not be considered a folk dance. The paper will highlight aspects that make this matter debatable, the historical perspective in which this way of dance arose as a means of propaganda, and a contemporary perspective in which the folk dance is seen as a form of folk art.
Contestations of the Field: Difficulties in Ethical Research of Folk Memories

Anthropologists introduced fieldwork especially in the study of pre-literate societies where history was not written and folklore was the only source of information. Therefore, one can understand the huge role and importance of fieldwork in the life of folklorists. However, there are hosts of reasons which affect good, ethical fieldwork today. Presently, in India, fieldwork and research is under duress. Technocratic rationality in the present time, social conservatism, a super-nationalist discourse, growing attack on public universities, massive ‘NGOvisation’ and ‘corporatization’ of Social Sciences etc., are some of the issues which have taken a toll on the fieldwork of researchers.

This paper will be an in-depth study of the problems researchers face in the field based on various interviews of both scholars and professors of different institutions and research organizations. The various issues will be elaborated and any suggestions offered will also be incorporated into the paper.

Objectivity in the Study of Kalevala-meter Archive Material

This paper deals with the pursuit of objectivity and ways of avoiding objectivity-threatening bias in the research of Kalevala-meter poetry. Kalevala-meter poetry was an oral tradition practiced widely in the Finno-Baltic area and used as artistic, mythic and historical language. The research on the subject faces objectivity related problems that are connected mainly to the nature of the research material, temporal, cultural and spatial distance of the communities it represents and the methodological and theoretical choices made by the researcher. I am approaching the subject by presenting proposals for solving some of the issues that I am facing in my ongoing doctoral thesis research. These include questions related to constructionism, relativism and epistemology. These afore mentioned subjects are connected to the fact that the research material at hand has been collected and archived for the most part during the 19th century. Even when noting basic criticism of sources, such as taking into account the paradigm that has guided the collection and archiving processes of the material, significant questions remain. Additionally, I will touch upon the question of methodological choices and their effect on the objectivity of the results. By addressing these questions in my paper I will aim to offer views that can be generally utilized also in research of different archive materials and encourage further discussion.
Informed Consent on Inscribing Elements in the Belarusian National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

In my presentation I’ll describe the procedure of inscribing elements on Belarusian National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and tell about the informed consent discussion. Sixty-nine elements are inscribed on the Belarusian National Inventory of ICH, created in accordance with the UNESCO 2003 Convention. The only element from Belarus inscribed on the List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is Christmas mumming in the village of Semezhava. Belarus has no elements inscribed on the Representative List of ICH of Humanity, but submitted 2 files in 2018.

In accordance with the Article 15 of the Convention, each State Party endeavor to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and individuals that create, maintain and transmit ICH, and to involve them actively in its management. According with the Articles I.1.U.4 and I.2.R.4 of the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention the elements must be nominated to the List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and to the Representative List of ICH of Humanity following the widest possible participation of the community, group or individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent. Informed consent is also needed for inscribing on Belarusian National Inventory.

ICH is regarded in Belarus mainly as elements of rural origin representing the culture of titular nation. So the carriers of ICH are usually rather old and not very well educated people. Taking their informed consent scholars and cultural workers explain them what it is, but is it really “informed” consent?

The Ethics of Anthropological Research in Places with Unsettled Status (Based on the Materials of Crimea).

Crimeans with diverse political views are hesitant to give interviews, which creates ethical difficulties. The act of interviewing is often perceived as an opening to get into the focus of some media or political force. My introduction as an anthropologistseems incomplete, and the informants attempt to determine my political views and “reveal” my connection tosomepolitical institution. Anthropological distancing, which I ascribe to, does not seem possible to my informants, especially considering the fact that I myself come from the Republic of Crimea.

The foremost tension is felt in Russian-Tatar relations, and any simultaneous work in these groups leads to a certain duality of the position of the folklorist. Both sides seek my agreement and confirmation of their national and political views and try to define me as belonging to one of the “camps”. Several times have Russians expressed condemnation for my conversing with the Tatars and vice versa.

There is also the problem of the interviews’ fixation and the principles of verification of folklore and ethnographic material, as an audio recording is required in modern Russia. The act of recording seems potentially dangerous to many informants, and people are reluctant to consent to it. Narratives turn out to be markers of identity and political views, and thus “just in case” they are not to be conserved, maintaining the uncertainty and multiplicity of the Crimean narrative field.

These ethical problems have arisen during my work in Crimea from 2015-2018.

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Ethical Challenges of Intangible Heritage Safeguarding in Belarus

The Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is characterized today by the construction of an ethical paradigm, which was first introduced in 12 ethical principles proclaimed by UNESCO in the Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2015. However, a reflection on ethics began with the inception of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003. Ethical principles are the products of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding specific content of the ICH. They were formulated from the perspective of anthropology, theory of communication, museology, intellectual property and human rights supporting on an anthropocentrism and humanism.

Belarus ratified the Convention 2003 on the top ten UNESCO countries in 2004 and has a number of achievements in the field of ICH safeguarding. But simultaneously Belarus faced a number of challenges addressed to ethical issue. First of all, challenges are related to a decontextualization of the ICH, which sometimes occurs against the background of the administrative systems and central planning of culture management. It’s also connected with the ICH transformation into secondary forms under the influence of modernization and through the ICH exemption from natural environment and moving it in artificial concert conditions as well. The second challenges arose in connection with a sufficiently active inclusion of ICH in tourism without consent and prior preparation of the communities for external intervention. One of the biggest problems is based on the phenomenon, which was named by Eric Hobsbawm as “the invention of tradition”. Thus the new traditions or their elements, which have been introduced in an intangible heritage context, are represented as old traditions.

Dog Cloning Discourses: What Are My Ethical and Academic Responsibilities for Incorporating the Valuable Views in Online Comments?

One day, while scrolling my Facebook wall, I struck academic gold. Someone had started a thread asking fellow group members, “Why do people think it is creepy to clone dogs?” Obviously this question was on everyone’s lips, including my own, after Barbara Streisand revealed she had cloned her own dog. However, as fascinating as the question is, it was the replies and resulting conversations that made my inner folklorist sit up and take notice. The interactions on this thread reveal a plethora of dichotomies people rely on to draw borders around what they believe to be right and wrong. The most pervasive border invoked in conversation is in regards to what may be considered natural or existing in nature versus human interference or something being man-made. Subsequent research led me to several videos focusing on two cases of dog cloning where I found dogs represented in narratives primarily as pets and/or as bodies on which medical procedures were carried out. The gold is in the comments where people continue to justify their beliefs on a system of oversimplified dichotomies. Carrying out this research has led me to ask, what are my ethical and academic responsibilities for incorporating the valuable views in online comments? Therefore, this question has become the driving force behind my paper.
Reflection on Some Ethical Challenge Using Interdisciplinary Methodology in Folkloristic and Social Anthropology

To build an interdisciplinary approach is not only a professional, but also a personal challenge because I had to overcome my own arrogance and to stop prioritizing knowledge’s gained in one branch of science, which was my primary education background and where I felt safer. A specific challenge was related to research ethics, which manifested in some dilemmas where solutions are unclear. For example, there is a different tradition in anthropology and folkloristic related to an informant’s anonymity. A narrator signature on the informed consent form establishes the validity of using of the data for scientific purposes. In folkloristics, referencing a narrator’s name and locality of her/his residence is an important acknowledgment of dignity and respect towards the narrator. Those references allow for the identifying and honour of persons with certain knowledge about some traditions. This is the basic principle in Folkloristic and a part of the scientific tradition in Latvia. After a folkloristic expedition, most interviews are included in public data bases and researchers are not able to control how this data will be used in the future. On the informed consent form, the narrator can determine data use restrictions; however, most of the narrators are more than 70 years old and have little understanding of modern data processing capabilities, which limits their understanding of data use in future. It is probably not a big problem if the object for analysis is neutral, for example cooking or sewing, but it can cause problems when the research object is deeply personal, even intimate. Contrary to Folkloristics, in Social Anthropology one of basic ethical principles is to provide anonymity for all informants which includes not only anonymization principles, but also data storage and destruction process that is the researcher’s responsibility. Anonymization is viewed as a guarantee for informant’s security, to prevent a situation when participation in the study can cause harm for persons involved in research. Both sciences use ideas about an informant’s best interests to justify her approach, but the best solution is different in every situation.

Ethic Issues by Collecting Life Stories About National / Ethnic Identity in Mixed-Ethnic Families

Ethnic and national identities are an important phenomenon for human beings, and are highlighted in our globalised world in a surprisingly strong way. These identities are always in flux, but have such characteristics and processes which can be identified using methods and theories of ethnology and cultural anthropology. In my research, I have collected the life stories within the Hungarian minority in Slovakia in mixed-ethnic families. In the presentation this research will be introduced. The main focus will be on the ethical questions of collecting life stories and asking about national/ethnic identity in mixed-ethnic families. Furthermore, there will be some interesting situations presented which anthropologists and ethnologists may have to deal with during their research.
Intersections of Indigenous Methodologies and Feminist Theory: Addressing Ethical Challenges in Research

Methodological approaches to research within academia are historically based on Western culture. These frameworks and approaches are often employed in non-Western environments in order to conduct research and fieldwork. As anthropological and folkloric studies have a legacy of being utilized in the process of colonization and nation building, researchers must be cognizant of these dynamics when working in the field with Indigenous peoples.

Approaches linking Indigenous and feminist methodologies can provide worthwhile insights to research carried out in these communities. These methodologies contain overlapping features of qualitative approaches which are relational while demonstrating process and content. An essential element of Indigenous, feminist, and folkloristic frameworks is to maintain a high degree of critical reflexivity in research practices. As more Indigenous scholars step forward and provide additional perspectives on these processes a dialogue has developed regarding ethical practices. The response to this sharing of knowledge in the academic community has been mixed.

As a non-Indigenous person who has a background in Indigenous studies and direct family connections to some Native American communities, I can share what I have learned in my own experiences both on a professional and personal level. Indigenous methodologies are paradigmatic in approach, with an emphasis on contextual knowledge rooted in a specific tradition. In my current research I am examining the work of Ainu scholar Sakurako Tanaka who explored gender in Ainu culture from a socio-ecological perspective. I will present on how these frameworks are essential in the efforts to decolonize folkloristic and ethnographic research.

Ethnomusicologist Ethical Issues. The Case of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Riga

When I was on my first study year in the Jazeps Vitols Academy of Music, I regularly attended venues organised by the Ukranian diaspora in Latvia. At one of them—it was May 17th of 2015—I got acquainted with the pastor of Riga parish of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church, Roman Sapozhuk. He invited me to attend the church service and, taking into the account my professional occupation, spoke about two things concerning liturgical music: a need for setting up a parish choir and the urgency to find a person who could lead the liturgical singing in the services. To this I responded that I lacked the necessary competence and skills because prior to my studies I had visited the church only on festive occasions with my family. The meeting ended with my agreement to regularly visit the parish, and to get acquainted both with the members of it and the liturgical music.

Already then I understood that for the participation in the liturgical singing it is necessary to master the structure of the liturgical rite, its musical material, and the manner of interpretation. Moreover, it was crucial to build a trustful relationship with the parish members because most of them are elderly people and are more reserved towards starting relationship with an outsider. I started to do all the aforementioned things, and as a result the aim and concept of my graduate thesis was developed—to describe the liturgical singing in the Riga parish of the Ukranian Greek Catholic church.

I wish to stress that from the very beginning of this work I was concerned with particular ethical issues. First of all, during my two-years’ stay in the parish, its members have fully incorporated me into their community as a regular active member and accordingly don’t view me as a neutral person, outsider, an indifferent music researcher and the like. So the questions are: how to explain to the people, that my aim is to describe the musical customs in the parish, not to take up a permanent job as a singing teacher? And moreover, how to get them to understand that I’m just doing a temporary research and after it’s finished, I’ll be visiting them more rarely? Is my position fair to them? What are ethically desirable methods to do the fieldwork? My fieldwork experience and these issues will be discussed in my paper.
The problems of defining, preserving and communicating the intangible cultural heritage of the Rabha people of Assam

The proposed study is an effort to study the problems of defining, preserving and communicating the intangible cultural heritage of the Rabha people of Assam. The Rabha tribe is one of the most aboriginal, distinguished, colourful primitive scheduled plain tribe of Assam and North-East India which placed fourth major scheduled tribe of Assam followed the Indo-Mongoloid culture. The Rabha tribe has a very rich intangible cultural heritage which includes traditions, customs, rites and rituals, usages, practices, religious belief, folk beliefs etc. Like the other indigenous tribal communities of the world, the Rabha tribe is also continuously practicing their traditional culture from ancient times although it is seen that the traditional social and cultural practices are changing tremendously and gradually taking a new cultural shape mainly due to the impact of Hinduism and Christianity in Assam. With the advent of Christianity, Hinduism and western culture, the transformation of Rabha intangible culture has taken place in numerous ways. Now the tribe is facing many problems in defining, preserving and communicating their culture under the influence of some other factors also.

Stereotypes in the First Latvian Folksong Collections

The first Latvian folksong collections were published in very beginning of 19th century by Baltic-German pastors. My research hypothesis is that collections reflect the stereotypes of colonial relationships, the Enlightenment influenced a shift of society relationships, and there were gender based assumptions and similar prejudices widely accepted by Baltic-German society at the turn of 18-19th century.

The comparative method has been chosen as the most appropriate for this research. To scrutinize the phenomena, firstly, a collection of Palsmane’s pastor F.D. Wahr (1808) and two collections of Rujiena’s pastor G. Bergmann (1807 and 1808), as well accompanying letters illustrating the publishing process have been used. There are a total of 900 folksongs in these sources. Comparing them with “Latvian Dainas” (compiled by K. Barons 1894-1915) will lead to findings of well represented themes and missing ones. The inclusion or discarding of different songs in first folk-song publication also manifests a certain view of authors and will be taken into account. During the second phase of research, the publications of different Baltic-German writers of 18th and 19th century (G.H. Merkel, F.B. Blaufus, K. Harder and others) will be used to compare the themes and view on life of Livonian peasants and outcomes of the first phase of research. The outcomes of the comparison will help develop the hypothesis.

The theoretical grounding for research will form the works of A. Dundes and M. Bynum forming a part for the stereotype relation to folklore and nation. On the matters related to colonialism, historical grounding and similar aspects the works of P. Daija, M. Grudule, A. Johansons, J. Dinsdorfs will be addressed.
Ethics and Archives: Multilevel Simultaneous Perspectives of Research Ethics

When doing research with archive material, research ethics may seem simple and problem-free—the material has already been recorded and archived; thus, it may seem that the earlier researchers have thought the ethical issues through and the material is available for further examinations. However, the material may have been recorded with certain research interests in mind and each researcher has to evaluate and confirm the suitability and coverage of the material for their own interests. Moreover, the paradigm shifts influence the theoretical and methodological questions in addition to the general attitudes and viewpoints of the position of material and informants. This paper focuses on the ethical questions that concern analyses of archived material that has been recorded in a different time under a different paradigm than the current research is conducted. These differences cause a variety of perspectives that the researcher may take into account: What are these perspectives and how do they effect the material, analysis and results? What kind of responsibility does the later researchers have for informants whom they have never met? My examples are from my ongoing PhD dissertation research of Karelian lament tradition. The material I use is recorded mostly in the middle of the 20th century, and in this presentation, I concentrate on the issues of the recording situation: the intersectional encounter between the informant and interviewer and the unusual situation for the sacredly delicate, intimate lament performance.

Folklore and Gaming Industry: The Case of Video Game Series “The Witcher”

In 2015, Polish video game company “CD Projekt” released “The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt” (Polish: Wiedźmin 3: Dziki Gon), an open-world computer game, based on the book series by Polish writer Andrzej Sapkowski, where you follow the adventures of one of the last witchers, Geralt of Rivia. During the first 6 weeks after this game reached game stores, it sold over 6 million copies worldwide and won the title of the “Game of the Year” in the “Game Developers Choice” in 2015. This incredible popularity and praise by both critics and gaming enthusiasts also brought attention to the previous two parts of this trilogy: “The Witcher” (2007) and “The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings” (2011).

“The Witcher” trilogy has already caught the attention of various scholars who analysed the game itself or in the context of different video games. In my opinion, “The Witcher” franchise could and should also interest folklorists because it is based on Slavic (Polish, Russian, Ukrainian) mythology and folklore, including some material from other European countries. The aim of this presentation is to compare the game lore from “The Witcher” trilogy with Slavic folklore material in order to reveal how authentic mythology is incorporated into the game, how it affects the trilogy, gaming community, and the tradition itself.
What is Real? Desaparecidos, Ethical Issues and Confusion about Folklore Research in Argentina

This presentation is taken from an interview that I had with professor María Inés Palleiro on April 27th 2018 in Tartu, Estonia. Since I was curious about her research on urban legends in her native Argentina, I decided to ask her questions about the link that she pointed out between her activity and the dramatic problem of desaparecidos. The resulting information that I have taken from this interview was more intriguing than I expected. I thought indeed that we would have just discussed the difficulties of researching about urban legends in a context of control by military power (some voices about desaparecidos were censored by the regime) and of hierarchization of genres (contemporary and non-nationalist folklore was not recognized as a topic worth studying), but unexpectedly further questions have arisen: are all the urban legends regarding desaparecidos in some way considerable as possible historical facts or just as not trustable tall stories spread within a context of common danger and fear? And thus, what is reality and truth in this case and, generally, in folklore?

The sense of confusion that these questions have brought up is the crucial point that I will discuss during this presentation; such confusion should be also linked to the historical period of military regime in Argentina and the ethical problems of conducting research about voices, rumors and urban legends in that context.

Hidden Ethnography: Alcohol and Fieldwork

The consumption of alcohol is a cultural phenomenon with a controversial and ambivalent nature. While there are negative aspects to it, there are also plenty of significant cultural and social facets of drinking. Alcohol is often an important part of the folk traditions. It is present in traditional celebrations, ceremonies, and seasonal festivities. Along with these, the production of alcohol can be seen as a tradition itself, such as the traditional skills of beer brewing or distilling moonshine and other home-brew spirits. A shared drink can serve as a means of breaking borders and making close bonds. So whether it be during a traditional celebration where folklorists have participated and taken a drink or a drink they have shared with their informant while on a fieldwork, consumption might lead to a closer relationship and mutual trust. Albeit from the point of view of ethical standards, alcohol is something that could corrupt the research so that it loses legitimacy, and, for the scholar, his academic reputation.

Even though alcohol is a part of the human experience, in cases when it is present in fieldwork and enters into the relationship of folk informant and folklorist, quite often it is a hidden ethnography—something that might be present at the fieldwork notes or conferred with humour among colleagues, but rarely discussed in public or present in the published research. This paper explores situations when alcohol comes into the relationship of folklorist and folk informant. Does the relationship become closer or corrupt? The paper gives an insight into the hidden ethnography of alcohol consumption that can be found in the materials held in the Archives of Latvian Folklore as well as the experiences of contemporary Latvian folklorists.
Dialogic Interactions, Folk Aesthetics and the *Therukoothu*, a Study

Therukoothu, a tradition that emerged in India during the Sangam period around 600-700 AD, is a fascinating religious folk theatrical custom. The art form traces its origins to Gingee, a small town in the Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu. Usually epics such as the Rāmāyana, Mahabhāratha and Śivapuranam among others are enacted as a part of a ritual; however, the theme may vary depending on the presiding deity in the temple.

The Draupadi Amman Koothu of Thiruvempattu celebrates goddess Draupadi in an eighteen-day long Thiruvizha or carnival held in her honour culminating in the procession of the Goddess on the ther. The therukkoothu is based on the Bharatham, from the Mahabharatha, written by Villiputturar the 14th century poet. Dance, drama, music poetry and prose stream seamlessly in and out of the various acts in therukoothu along with instances of sudden deviation from didacticism into slapstick humour and social satire. Such a fluid existence between the theatrical world and real world provides scope for dialogic interventions. Although once a popular theatre form, therukoothu is a dying tradition, facing stiff competition from the digital world with its myriad forms of entertainment. Not only does it entertain the audience with rollicking laughter but also brings religion to the common folk. This study is an attempt to explore the various folk aesthetics of this cultural heritage emphasizing therukoothu as a vernacular religious practice.

What to do with the Diaries in the Archives of Folklore?

The Archives of Latvian Folklore, along with other types of folklore units, stores memories, life stories, and diaries. Historically, simply by being collected, materials were separated from the wider context of informants and as written folklore units they represent collective identity, while autobiographical materials encapsulate an individual interpretation of time and space. Out of all the autobiographical materials, diaries are the medium which include and deliver attitudes, momentary impressions, and emotions to us in the most lively form. They differ in content, form, and other parameters, while, at the same time, they are characterized by common trait — the author’s subjective documentation of a particular reality. Even though the material is of a subjective nature, it also opens a broad field for cultural and historical research. Autobiographic material and especially diaries can include useful contextual information, but the tradition of writing diaries is, by itself, an interesting and broad research field which has been established in time, and has its own set of specific practices and rituals allowing to explore the diaries’ social life.

The paper gives an insight of the new initiative — “The Autobiography Collection at the Archives of Latvian Folklore” which was started in early 2018 with the aim of preserving and documenting the tradition of life writing in Latvia. The paper explores how diary writers who had submitted materials to the archive reflect on their experience of documenting their subjective reality.
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